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HISTORY OF WASHINGTON TWP.



Re-Printed from

**Joseph H. Zerbey History
of
Pottsville and Schuylkill County
Pennsylvania**

As Published in Full in "Pottsville
Republican" and "Pottsville Morning Paper"



1934

**J.H. Zerbey Newspapers Inc., Print,
Pottsville, Pennsylvania**

**Revised and expanded 2007
Pinegrove History Society**

Allen County Public Library

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A publication of the Pinegrove Historical Society
Pine Grove, Pennsylvania
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The Pinegrove Historical Society would like to express its gratitude to the "Pottsville Republican" for granting the Society permission to reproduce some of their historical publications, such as this reprint of the "History of Washington Township," for the benefit of the public.

"History of Washington Township" was originally published on pages 1044-1047 in Joseph Henry Zerbey's History of Pottsville and Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania.

This 2007 reprint has been revised through the addition of notes taken from "Days of Yore" (which were included in the previous reprint) and sketches by Margery Wheeler Mattox, which enhance the information about Washington Township in this booklet. The print has been enlarged to aid in the reading of this history.

The Society also thanks Margery Wheeler Mattox for allowing the use of her sketches to illustrate this booklet. These postcard sketches and many others are available for purchase at the Society.

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Pinegrove Historical Society

P.O. Box 65, Pine Grove, Pennsylvania 17963

Washington Twp. Once Had Many Mills

(From "Pottsville Republican"- "Morning Paper,"
October 31, 1934)

Washington Township was carved out of Wayne and Pine Grove Townships, but the earliest settlement in what is now Washington Township dates back to a time when a man by the name of Philip Snell settled on a tract of land of about 300 acres in the northeastern section of the Township. On May 14, 1768 Philip Snell sold this tract to Christopher Crawford. In 1795 Christopher Crawford sold it to John Brown, a great, great, great grandfather of the present owner Charles H. Brown, who bought it from his father, Christian Brown in 1913. Other important early settlers of the township was a family by the name of Jacoby. One of the Jacoby's, while cutting wood at the very door of his house, was attacked by the Indians and beheaded. This section of the township seems to have been a favorable resort for Indians for in later years they seem to have retraced this territory. As late as the early part of the 19th century a girl was seen in the forest by children on an errand to some neighbor's. Whether this girl was alone or

accompanied by other Indians is a mystery as much as where she went. Some of the other early settlers of the northern section of the township were Michael Fahner, who received a warrant in 1765 to a tract of 331 acres; and Daniel Mulin and John Conrad to another tract. Part of this tract is now owned by Uriah Rhein, purchased in 1933. Further to the west on the Swatara at a very early date a grist mill was built by Henry Heil. This mill was subsequently owned by Charles Maurer, Charles Roeder and finally by John Roeder. This mill was destroyed by fire in 1933.

The Swatara seems to have been very important for its water power, which is proven by the numerous saw mills and grist mills for which it provided power.

In the southern section of the township the first grist mill was built by John Adam Brown, a native of Germany, in 1772, on the Little Swatara. This mill is still in operation and is operated by a great, great, grandson, John E. Brown.

Further west of this mill there was another mill built and operated by Mr. Reeser, then by Mr. Bixler and later by Henry Strauch, who built a new mill in 1872. Mr. Strauch came from Pottsville and was a breaker-builder by trade. Henry Strauch sold the mill to Henry W. Strauch, a native of Wayne Township. All of these early

millers lived in the mill.

The section known as Rock had a tannery, built by a Mr. Boy in 1790. This tannery was in operation but a few years when it was abandoned.

Just north of the geographical center of the township is the valley known as DeTurksville, formerly called Silliman. This valley had the first tavern in the township kept by Solomon Christ, about the year 1827.

Through this valley the old-fashioned stage coaches made regular trips between Pine Grove and Sch. Haven.

[Page 1044]

Among early settlers, prior to 1790, were Philip Zerbe, a Mr. Tebbish, Nicholas Shuck, Adam Kalbach, Geo. Kremer, Wm. Kremer, Peter Weaver, Peter Paffenberger, Nicholas Paffenberger, Henry Appel, Michael Bressler, Paul Lengel and the Gebert, Diehl, Boyer, Bretzins, Kerschner, Wagner, Bilger, and Werner families.

In 1856, when Washington Township was formed, it had a population of 1313; natives 1301, foreigners 12, white 1307, colored 6. The present population (1930) is 1252.

Early Religious Gatherings

The early religious gatherings in the northern part of the township were held in a spring house, just about 100 yards northwest of where the grist mill stood at Roedersville. The quarters soon became inadequate so that the necessity of a church building was realized.

The first church in this section of the township was built by Joshua Strauphauer of the Brethren Faith commonly called the Dunkards at a very early date. He also was the first preacher, succeeded by George Smith, followed by Michael Haldeman, Daniel Kutz, and at present the pulpit is occupied by Rev. Elias Morgan.



Hetzel's Church

Salem's (Hetzel's) Church, the oldest place of worship within the boundaries of Washington Township, had its beginning in 1783, when a Lutheran Congregation was organized there. For several years prior to this the settlers had held religious services at the various homes. The land, a tract of about fifty acres, was given by the state, as a grant for church and school purposes.

Peter Hetzel taught school in the first church building, and when no minister was available, he read sermons and conducted other religious services. The first ministers who served this congregation lived in Berks or Lebanon County and visited this section and ministered to the spiritual needs of the people, coming at intervals of from four to six weeks.

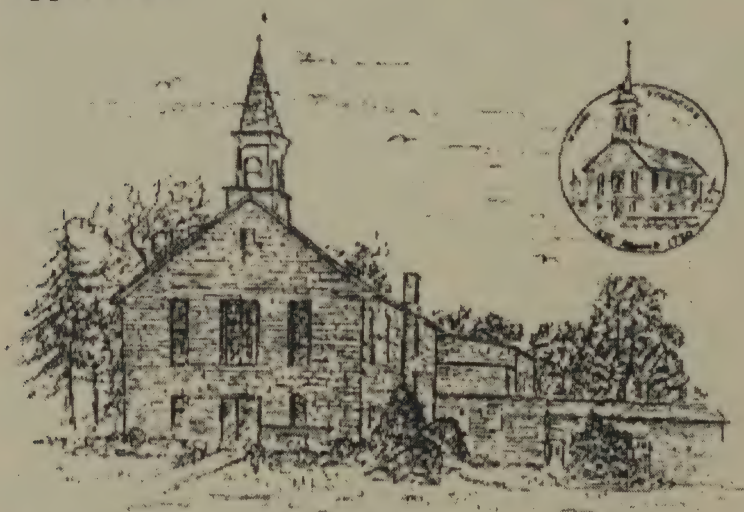
The first minister of these people was Wm. Kurtz, who began his work here in 1783. He continued as pastor until his death in 1799.

The second church building was erected and was dedicated May 25, 1797, the ground for this building having been given by Peter Hetzel. The building was made of logs and weather-boarded. There was a balcony on three sides of the building.

The following ministers served as Lutheran pastors: Rev. Wm. Kurtz; Rev. Andrew Schurtz,

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Penna.

1799-1802; Rev. John Knoske, 1802-1811; Rev. Geo. Mennig, 1811-1833; Rev. Wm. Mennig, son of George Mennig, 1833-1839; Rev. A. B. Gockelen, Rev. J. F. Haesbert, Rev. Benj. Sadler, Rev. Julius Evhart, 1839-1856; Rev. Elias S. Henry, 1865-1897; Rev. Herman F. Kroh, 1897-1911; Rev. Aaron H. Klick, 1912-1920; Rev. Ernest A. Webber, 1921-1925; Rev. M. M. Kipps, 1926-.



*Salem Hitzels Church
Rt 3 Pine Grove, Pa.*

*Marquy Wheeler Mello
2002*

Reformed Ministers

In the early days of the nineteenth century, settlers of the Reformed faith arrived in this section and in 1822, the Lutheran congregation

granted the privilege of holding services in the church. This continued until 1848, when a Reformed congregation was organized and was granted equal rights with the Lutherans.

From 1848 to the present time this has been a Union Church.

The Reformed ministers who served this congregation were: Rev. John Gring, 1827-1870; Rev. Christian Mutschler, 1870-1874; Rev. Eli E. Hiester, 1874-1877; Rev. B.S. Metzgar, 1880-1884; Rev. Geo. A. Sellers, 1885-1887; Rev. Dr. C. B. Schneder, 1888-1891; Rev. David Schierer, 1891-1892; Rev. Dr. Elmer S. Noll, 1893-1902; Rev. S. Sidney Kohler, 1903-1907; Rev. Howard A. Althouse, 1907-1911; Rev. Dennis Sipple, 1914-1920; Rev. Chas. H. Brown, 1920-1926; Rev. Eneas B. Messner, 1926-.

[Page 1045]

The second church building becoming too small to accommodate the increasing number of members, a new edifice was erected in 1880. This edifice is beautifully located several hundred feet east of the second church.

Many changes and improvements have been made within the last twenty-five years. The combined membership is about 325.

A Sunday School was organized about

sixty five years ago. Mr. Thiel, a German, living nearby, was one of the leaders in this movement. For many years the Sunday School services were held only about half the year. Several years later a permanent organization was effected. Lewis Hummel, Moses W. Loy, and Jacob Faust being leaders at this time. The school has increased steadily and a short time ago the Sunday School room was enlarged. The present superintendent, Miss Miriam V. Readinger, has served faithfully for the last five years. The school enrollment is 250.

Zion's Evangelical Church

Zion's Evangelical Church is located about one mile east of Rock Station. Traveling ministers of this denomination visited this section and held services at the home of John Manbeck, Sr., in the year 1831. Regular meetings were held until the year 1858, when a congregation was organized. A religious revival was conducted by Rev. Lewis Snyder at the home of William Schoener. A class of fourteen was instructed, William Schoener was chosen leader and Frank Reber, exhorter.

In 1862 the congregation built a church edifice on land given by John Manbeck, Sr.

A Sunday School was organized, Frank Reber serving as the first superintendent. Rev. J.

H. Hoffman of Pine Grove is the present pastor.



[Page 1046]

The following are a few more items known about the villages in Washington Township which are interesting and recalled from "Days of Yore."

Many interesting people with very interesting occupations resided in all the villages.

In Roedersville, there were several saw mills. Samuel Herring, born in 1856, was a blacksmith and undertaker. He made caskets and

his wife Sarah made the lining for the caskets.

Ed Herring operated a shoe repair shop in the late 1800's. Moses Herring operated the Cider Press which was later was run by Foster Frantz.

The General Store, opened by Cyrus Ankenbrandt, was later operated by Harvey Hughes in the 1920's.

John Roeder operated a saw mill along with the Dewalds, Renningers, Herrings and Siegels.

Milton Spancake operated a Hotel and implement store.

Across from the house and barn owned by the Peter Dewald family, Roedersville had its ball diamond. Roedersville also had a band hall where a Grand Ball was held on Saturday, February 24, 1923.

An open iron bridge was the site of a tragic accident and the bridge was changed to a cement bridge, and a dangerous curve in the road changed to being a more safe road to travel.

Ralph Zerbe operated a coal breaker in Roedersville and his wife Minnie conducted a small business to the rear of their house, making potato chips until the building burned down.

The Martin Dauberts were owners of the turkey farm. Renningers fish dams were on the Dan Herring farm.

In Deturksville village and area were several businesses. Abraham Stump operated the International Harvester Tractor Parts and Service business. Frantz Willowdale Dairy delivered milk and dairy products door to door. "Dad" Burnam operated a gas station and small store along Route 443.

Pine Forest Park was a popular place where one could have a picnic in the grove or enjoy a meal in the restaurant run by Mr. Lewars and later the Ed Scholl family. Camp meetings were also held in the grove.

Ray Morgan operated a store and delivered orders to the home along with running the hotel known as the Red Lion Hotel. The De-Turks operated a Tea Room and hotel and the dance hall where children from the Deturksville School were taken for a picnic on the last day of school.

In the Rock area, Bill Yohe operated the tinsmith shop. The Rock Hotel had many owners and operators. Levi Rhein operated the Swab Wagon business and his son Uriah and family operated a grocery store on the road leading to the school

Jacob Warner also operated a store in this area; while the Ralph Warner family's living quarters housed a store, Post Office, Railroad Ticket and Express Office.

INDEX

Ankenbrandt, Cyrus	10
Arch, The (Swatara Creek) Sketch	11
Berger, Paul	11
Brethren Faith	4
Brown, Charles	1
Brown, Christian.....	1
Brown, John	1
Brown, John Adam	2
Brown, John E.....	2
Christ, Solomon	3
Church of the Brethren Sketch	4
Conrad, John	2
Covered Bridge at Rock Sketch.....	9
Crawford, Christopher	1
Daubert, Martin.....	10
De-Turks	12
DeTurksville	3, 12
Dunkards	4
Fahner, Michael	2
Heil, Henry.....	2
Herring, Ed.....	10
Herring, Moses.....	10
Herring, Samuel	9
Hetzel, Peter.....	5
Hetzel's Church	5
Hetzel's Church Sketch	6
Indian Attacks	1

Jacoby Family	1
Kurtz, William	5
Manbeck, John	8
Maurer, Charles	2
Morgan, Ray	12
Mulin, Daniel	2
Red Lion Hotel.....	12
Reformed Ministers	6-8
Rhein, Levi.....	12
Rhein, Uriah.....	2, 12
Rock	3, 12
Roeder, Charles.....	2
Roeder, John	2, 10
Roedersville	4, 9-10
Salem Hetzel's Church	5
Salem Hetzel's Church Sketch	6
Snell, Phillip.....	1
Spancake, Milton	10
Strauch, Henry	2
Stroupbauer, Joshua	4
Stump, Abraham	12
Union Church.....	7
Washington Township	3
Yohe, Bill.....	12
Young, Jack	11
Zerbe, Ralph.....	10
Zion's Evangelical Church	8



